

Moniz-Carroll, Rhonda

From: Paula Keller <Paula.Keller@NewBritainCT.gov>
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 10:55 AM
To: JudTestimony
Subject: Testimony for 2 bills: SUPPORT HB 6187 (court advocate for animals) and SUPPORT SB 1128 (AAC accelerated rehab in cases of animal abuse)

**SUPPORT of HB 6187, AN ACT CONCERNING COURT PROCEEDINGS AND THE PROTECTION OF ANIMALS
and
SUPPORT of SB 1128, AN ACT CONCERNING THE USE OF ACCELERATED REHABILITATION IN THE CASE OF ANIMAL
ABUSE**

Dear Co-Chair Coleman, Co-Chair Tong, and Honorable Members of the Judiciary Committee,

Please accept this testimony in SUPPORT of HB 6187, which would establish a process for appointing an advocate for an animal that is the subject of a criminal court proceeding, and in SUPPORT of SB 1128, which would prevent persons charged with committing animal abuse from using accelerated rehabilitation.

HB 6187 will help to facilitate animal cruelty prosecutions by ensuring appropriate representation for the victims.

SB 1128 will help to ensure that violence toward animals is taken seriously and promotes appropriately severe penalties as well as a record of these crimes in cases where people are responsible for causing animals to suffer.

Hundreds of animals are seized every year by animal control officers in suspected abuse cases. These animals have already been subjected to very poor conditions and treatment, and are then placed in municipal or state animal control facilities where they await their fate. There are many animals that have sat in municipal shelters for more than a year, their lives on hold due to a court system that refuses to recognize that a live animal is suffering. Not only does this have an adverse effect on the animal, it also sends a message to the animal control officer that their efforts to rescue animals in abusive homes are wasted on a judicial system that does not seem to care, and gives the animal control officer no incentive to continue seizing animals from abusive situations. Having an advocate appointed to these animals would be beneficial in giving the animal a voice, and hopefully being able to speed up the decision making as to where the animal will ultimately be placed, and also prevent animals from being returned back into the abusive home which unfortunately happens more often than not in some towns.

Several studies show a link between animal abuse, child abuse, and domestic violence. Many serial killers and violent offenders began their life of killing by preying on innocent animals. Animal abuse is not a crime which should be taken lightly. It is the "gateway" crime into a life of violence, and should be taken very seriously, with serious consequences. While I realize the prison systems are overcrowded and jail time may not always be a possibility, there should be an offender tracking system with the most violent offenders, just like the sex offender registry. Accelerated rehabilitation should not be an option.

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